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NEW BOOKS REVIEWED

WHAT CAN I KNOW? By GEORGE TRUMBULL LADD, LL.D. New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1914.

The man of learning who puts into a little book his best and most available useful thought, so simply expressed that all who are intelligent, with or without technical training, may understand, does an eminently good thing. He does a thing that is, in the first place, of great practical use; for nowadays we need most of all the books that adequately sum up and interpret the great and growing mass of human knowledge. Volumes written to develop special theses, or to make public the results of particular investigations, do but form part of a sort of general conversation carried on by scholars and leisured thinkers, and such books are only secondarily educative. But the little books that sum up and interpret the conclusions of sound learning are educative in the highest degree. It is no mere affirmation of the fallacy that learning can be had ready-made, to say that such books may supply to thinking but time-pressed readers—and there are many of these—a part of the fruits of a university education, and perhaps the best part. More than this, a book like Dr. George Trumbull Ladd's *What Can I Know?*—a book that expresses sincere convictions and reveals to some extent the writer's own inward "cosmos"—has a real spiritual value. To say that Dr. Ladd's book may heal sick minds and characters is only to state the probability of its doing what, in fact, sound books are always doing. Is it not upon record that William James's writings have saved souls? And for the average mind, at least, Dr. Ladd's doctrines undoubtedly contain more that is clarifying and strengthening than do William James's.

Dr. Ladd approaches his subject as one seeking for practical light and leading. Illuminatingly he discusses the question of the limitations of human knowledge, the effects of heredity and of environment, including the opinions of others, everywhere deepening the significance of those lessons which common sense and experience teach with more or less thoroughness to the virtuous and the intelligent. Analyzing the process by which we know, he sums up his results in the notable saying that "*knowledge is a matter of the entire man*—the real knower is the whole self, not as a 'naked mind,' but as a living soul." Following up the discussion of the cognitive process with a chapter upon "Thinking One's Way through a Subject," he maintains the important doctrine that not *ideas*, but only *judgments*, are true or false; that our thinking, if it is to be of any real worth, must be, to borrow an excellent word from the vocabulary of Natty Bumppo, *judgmatical*. "Men who are continually proclaiming 'my idea' of this or that," writes Dr. Ladd, "unless one pardons them as unskilled in the use of English, or as thoughtless followers of a false psychology, are apt to be heard with con-

tempt." The truth that lies back of this is one of the profoundest in philosophy: "All human science, all human faiths, all human conduct, assume, expand, confirm, the correlation between knowledge and reality." These are good words, and most of us would hear them with inward satisfaction even if they were unsupported by other argument. Further, the author explains the various degrees of certainty in knowledge, the value and danger of jumping at conclusions, and the fallibility of formal logic. His chapter on "The Worth and Way of Self-Knowledge" is almost as good for moderns as were the doctrines of Socrates for the young men of Athens, and certainly is as much needed. In this chapter, besides clarifying many other matters, Dr. Ladd shows in rather startling fashion how much scientific truth is expressed in such common sayings as "He is not the same man as he was twenty years ago," or, "Be a real man"; the cold fact being that "different men are real, self-same, and one with themselves in very different degrees."

If overmuch philosophizing have made us mad, Dr. Ladd's book will do much to restore us to sanity; if we are intellectually unambitious because we are muddled without knowing it, or because we are indolent so far as "subjective" thought is concerned, and consequently deficient in self-knowledge, the same book will help to rouse us to a deeper consciousness.

REMINISCENCES OF TOLSTOY. By HIS SON, COUNT ILYA TOLSTOY. New York: The Century Company, 1914.

Tolstoy—perhaps the man of most commanding character, of most widespread influence upon ethical thought and feeling, and of most interesting personality, who has lived into our time—is portrayed by his son with an affectionate frankness and an outspoken charm that place him in an entirely new and a most attractive light. Wholly uncontroversial in tone, and equally free from unfilial complaint and from special pleading, Count Ilya's book is the most effective preventive of superficial or sneering criticisms of his father that could have been composed. For it shows Tolstoy as a father, as a husband, as a man among other men, as a keen and gentle humorist—it shows, indeed, the real man.

The volume is as remarkable for its illustrations as for its text, and there is such a harmony between the two that it may not be amiss to speak of the pictures first, as the more immediately striking. There is one photograph, in particular, which shows the Tolstoy family at dinner: the two central figures might almost have been transferred from the canvas of an Italian religious painter; the remaining figures may strongly remind us—particularly if we happen to be of New England ancestry—of our own great-aunts and great-uncles and old family friends. Now this is precisely the note of the whole book—the servant in the house, the saint in the family—*our* family—and yet the man. Again and again we are made to feel what we often do feel in connection with Russian memoirs—that the Russian people, however sharply differing from us in national and institutional mind, are the most like us of any race in the thought and feeling of every day. The points wherein they differ from and excel us are self-knowledge, its concomitant insight into human nature, and the power of self-expression; but these faculties are the very ones that enable them to paint pictures of life in which we recognize a resemblance to ourselves.

Perhaps the most engaging trait of his father that Count Ilya reveals is